

LESSON PLAN

Walking Together

by Elder Dr. Albert D. Marshall & Louise Zimanyi

illustrated by Emily Kewageshig

Lesson Plan by Kareena Butler

GENRE: Picture book

THEMES: Indigenous cultures and traditions, environmental conservation & protection, sense & sensation, nature, observation

SUITABLE FOR: Grade Pre-K–2, Ages 4–7

GUIDED READING LEVEL: Fountas and Pinnell H

LEXILE: TBD

COMMON CORE STANDARDS: RL.1.1,2,3,4,5,6,7,9
W.1.1,3,5,6
SL.1.1,1a,1b,1c,2,3,4,5,6
L.1.4,4a,4b,4c,5,5a,5b,5c,5d,6

SUMMARY:

This innovative picture book introduces readers to the concept of Etuaptmumk—or Two-Eyed Seeing in the Mi'kmaq language—as we follow a group of young children connecting to nature as their teacher.

A poetic, joyful celebration of the Lands and Waters as spring unfolds: we watch for Robin's return, listen for Frog's croaking, and wonder at Maple Tree's gift of sap. Grounded in Etuaptmumk, also known as Two-Eyed Seeing, the gift of multiple perspectives, and the Mi'kmaw concept of Netukulimk, meaning to protect Mother Earth for the ancestors, present, and future generations. *Walking Together* nurtures respectful, reciprocal, responsible relationships with the Land and Water, plant-life, animals, and other-than-human beings for the benefit of all.

***Educator note:** This story is inspired by late Mi'kmaq leader Chief Charles Labrador and reflects perspectives from this First Nations community. It is important to note that this perspective may be similar and/or different from other First Nations, Inuit, or Métis communities.

*Incorporate this picture book across the Sciences, Social Studies, Arts and Language curriculums.

Please remember that the suggested questions and activities within this lesson plan are meant to serve as a starting point. They should be tweaked and/or reformatted to best fit your students, context, and community to ensure equity and inclusion.

Before Reading the Book

These activities build the context, introduce the topic of the book, and establish prior knowledge and interest.

1. Take students outside to a park, trail/forest (if this is accessible), the schoolyard, or even a walk in the neighborhood. Ask students to observe the environment using all of their senses and write or draw 5–10 words in their journal. Students can share verbally (with a partner, popcorn-style, or in a larger group). These words or phrases will be useful for the following class or small groups discussion. (It can also be used in the extension activities.)
2. Present the following two questions (found in the Afterword of the book) for a discussion:
 - What is nature teaching you about the plants, the animals, and yourself?
 - How can you say thank you to living things like trees, water, and plants? What are some ways that you can show them how you feel?

*Educators can revisit these questions anytime during and/or after reading to see how answers grow or change.



INTRODUCE THE BOOK

1. Learn about the authors, Elder Albert D. Marshall (Mi'kmaq, pronounced "meeg mah") and Louise Zimanyi (French-Canadian, Hungarian), as well as the illustrator Emily Kewageshig (Anishnaabe).

*Author/illustrator information is provided at the end of the story. Educators may also look up on a map their communities/territories where they are from.

2. Explain that the words and images of the book offer a Mi'kmaq perspective of Two-Eyed Seeing (Etuaptmunk in Mi'kmaq) and protecting Mother Earth (Netukulimk in Mi'kmaq).

***Two-Eyed Seeing:** Being able to see Indigenous knowledge and ways of seeing the world with one eye and Western knowledge with the other. Acknowledging both ways as valuable will benefit all living things now and for future generations.

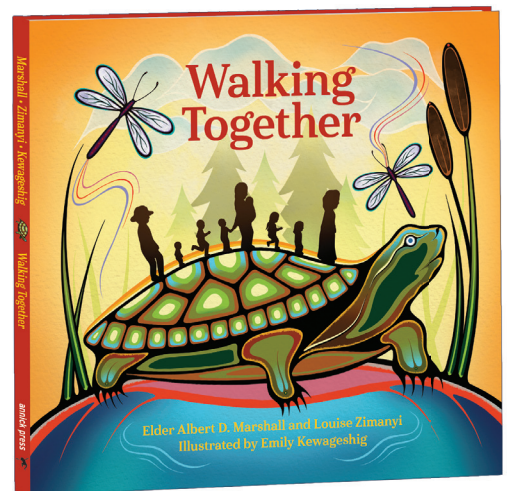
COVER OF THE BOOK

Examine the book cover and the intentional images the illustrator used.

Ask students:

- What things do you notice or wonder about?
- What time of year could it be and how do you know?
- Why do you think the illustrator, Emily Kewageshig, illustrated humans walking on a turtle's back? What do you think the illustrator wanted you to know about First Nations perspectives/stories?

*Turtle Island refers to North America, a name used by First Nations (not usually Inuit or Métis).



While Reading the Book

These activities check on comprehension, stimulate interest, involve readers in reflection as they read, and encourage consideration of other readers' reactions.



Read the entire picture book at once or use the literacy prompts to promote discussions and make connections with the images and the words as you go.

“When we walk together in a good way . . .”

This phrase is repeated throughout the story. In the images we see people walking together in a good way, seeing the world through two eyes.

Ask students:

- What do you notice about the people? What are they doing? (i.e., they are of all ages, look happy, excited, they are running, respectful of nature, curious)
- What does it mean to walk together in a good way? What does it look like, sound like, and feel like?

Activity:

- Play the Cooperative game where students work together as a group or in smaller groups to achieve a common goal (i.e., build a tower using blocks, play hula hoop pass, line up in alphabetical order).

“We receive the gifts of Mother Earth . . .”

Mother Earth gives us everything we need to survive. In the images, we observe gifts like maple syrup, food and clean water, and gifts that we can feel (joy, happiness, strength).

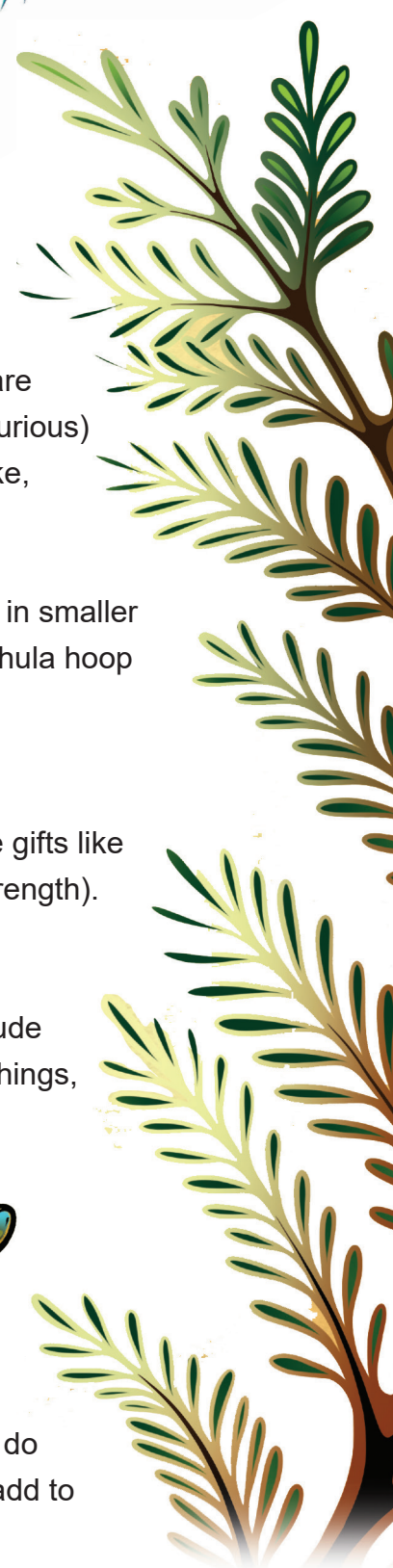
We also learn from the swimmer, crawler, flyers, and four-leggeds.

Ask students:

- What gifts does Mother Earth share with us? (Some answers might include that we receive all that we need to survive, medicine, food, shelter, teachings, clothes, happiness, joy.)

Activity:

- Create a visual representation to demonstrate the gifts Mother Earth gives humans and the gifts humans give to Mother Earth. Students can use words, phrases, and pictures. Some answers might include plastic, taking space, destroy habitats, feed birds. There may be more negatives than positives. What do students notice about the list? Reflect on the ways they can remove or add to the list to make a positive change.



“[W]e learn about the gifts and stories of our family, of the Lands, and of the Waters. . . . we give back gifts by taking care of our family.”

Throughout the story the authors use the words *relatives* and *family*.

Ask students:

- What do the authors mean when they use the words *relatives* and *family*? Whom do these words include?

Activity:

- Which animals are in the illustration? What are their stories, their names, and what do they teach us about how we are all connected?

“When we walk together in a good way, we learn to see the world through two eyes.”

Ask students:

- How will we walk together in a good way?

Activities:

- Brainstorm actions that go beyond saying thank you. Create a list of daily actions to build reciprocal relationships with the Land. (i.e., picking up garbage, not wasting water, learning the name of a new bird, plant, animal, walking in your neighborhood and noticing seasonal changes.)

After Reading the Book

These activities inspire continued reflection and response to the text, bring conclusion to the experience of reading this text, and stimulate further extensions.

Return to the same outdoor area, the park, trail/forest, school yard or neighborhood. Ask students to observe the environment keeping in mind the two questions that were posed previously:

- What is nature teaching you about the plants and the animals and about yourself?
- How can you say thank you and show your gratitude?

Add reflections to journals or chart paper and discuss the following:

- How has your experience been transformed by reading *Walking Together*?
In what ways is being on the Land different? What do you notice or wonder?
- How will your actions towards all living things be kind and caring?
How will you advocate for and build reciprocal relationships with all living things?



Extension Activities

These activities are only a start. They are designed to support the goal of helping students explore the story and their own creativity.

VISUAL ARTS

Examine and discuss the artwork on each page using critical analysis questions to appreciate the artist's techniques and elements of culture to bring the story alive.

Throughout the story, we see areas of the artwork that are emphasized by the artist with the use of color and/or lines. Identify these areas and discuss how the images tell a story (i.e., the roots in the ground, the direction of the sunrays, the direction of the blades of grass, the lines on the trees, around and on the animals).

Go through the questions with the class, then students can choose an image they connect to or are interested in and discuss in a smaller group:

- What adjectives describe this artwork? What verbs describe this artwork?
- What emotions do you feel?
- What grabs your attention on this page? Why?
- Choose an element of design to focus on or highlight each one (color, form, line, shape, space, texture, and value). Ask students to choose a color in the image and say what emotion they feel when looking at it. Learn about how the artist uses lines. Have students discuss the ways the lines lead their eyes through the artwork and/or to focus on a particular area.

CREATE

* Encourage students to create using their own imagination and creativity and not copy the artist Emily Kewageshig's art (or other Indigenous art).

1. Make art using items found in nature (as seen on the spread with Frog and Ruby-throated Hummingbird). Remember to ask before taking items from the ground. Educators might bring frames outdoors and take pictures of the art, then students can write or record a reflection describing their art, perhaps even including an explanation of why they chose certain materials (elements of design) and how they felt while creating. Then, students can do a gallery walk to view other classmates' creations.



2. Create posters to encourage action and advocate for the water, trees, plants, and animals (use the actions brainstormed during reading).
3. Co-write a poem using the list of 5–10 words. The last word of each line should be a word from the list. The intention of the poem is to describe what students observed using their senses.

MUSIC

If this story had a soundtrack, music, or sound effects, what would it sound like?

Create a soundscape for the picture book using instruments, items found outdoors, or the body. Keep in mind the many sounds of spring: birds singing, geese calls, frogs croaking, the various ways the wind blows, footsteps, crackling of fire, maple sap dripping in metal buckets. Each student can create and perform personalized sounds for specific pages while the educator reads the story.

SCIENCES

1. Learn about the animals and plants in the story (i.e., frog, beaver, ruby-throated hummingbird, deer, turtle, hawk, sweetgrass, milkweed, daisy). Include the life cycles and the gifts they provide us. Extend the learning by researching ecosystems/habitats in your area and the impact of human footprint.
2. Research the history and importance of maple sap/syrup to First Nations.
3. Watch or read stories about the importance of sweetgrass to First Nations.
4. This story takes place during Sqoljuiku's/Frogs Croaking Time Moon in Unima'ki (Cape Breton, Nova Scotia). The names of the thirteen moons are different across the country. The names given reflect the cycles of the season and what is happening on the Land at the time of the full moon. For instance, some names describe the plants growing or those being harvested, the changes in weather or even which animals are returning or leaving the territory during that moon cycle. You may wish to learn the names of the moons from your territory and post on your classroom calendar. Contact the Indigenous Lead at your school board to connect with a Community partner for traditional knowledge. *An honorarium may be required for this.

